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DOCTOR STRANGE®

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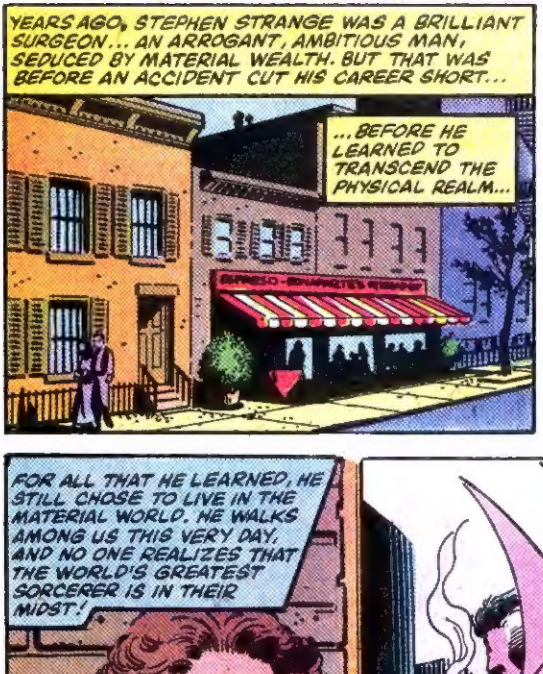
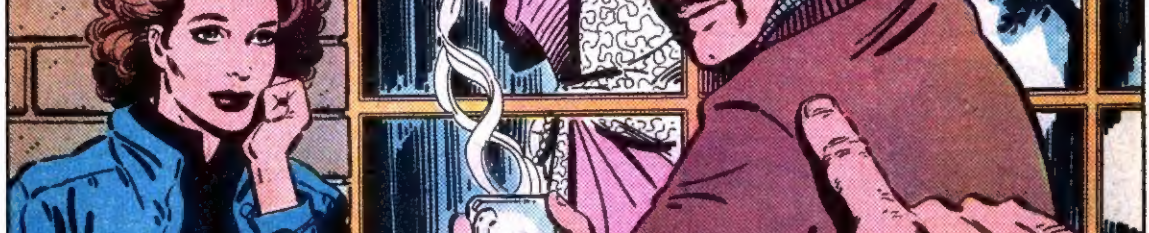

YEARS AGO, STEPHEN STRANGE WAS A BRILLIANT SURGEON... AN ARROGANT, AMBITIOUS MAN, SEDUCED BY MATERIAL WEALTH. BUT THAT WAS BEFORE AN ACCIDENT CUT HIS CAREER SHORT...
...BEFORE HE LEARNED TO TRANSCEND THE PHYSICAL REALM...

...BEFORE HE LEARNED TO WIELD THE MAGICAL FORCES WHICH STILL SHAPE OUR LIVES!
AND YET, STEPHEN STRANGE DID NOT TURN HIS BACK ON REALITY!


FOR ALL THAT HE LEARNED, HE STILL CHOSE TO LIVE IN THE MATERIAL WORLD. HE WALKS AMONG US THIS VERY DAY. AND NO ONE REALIZES THAT THE WORLD'S GREATEST SORCERER IS IN THEIR MIDST!
IT'S YOU... DOCTOR STRANGE... MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!
THAT MAY BE ABOUT TO CHANGE.

GATHER MY DISCIPLES BEFORE ME!

A MYSTICAL REPAST, PREPARED BY:

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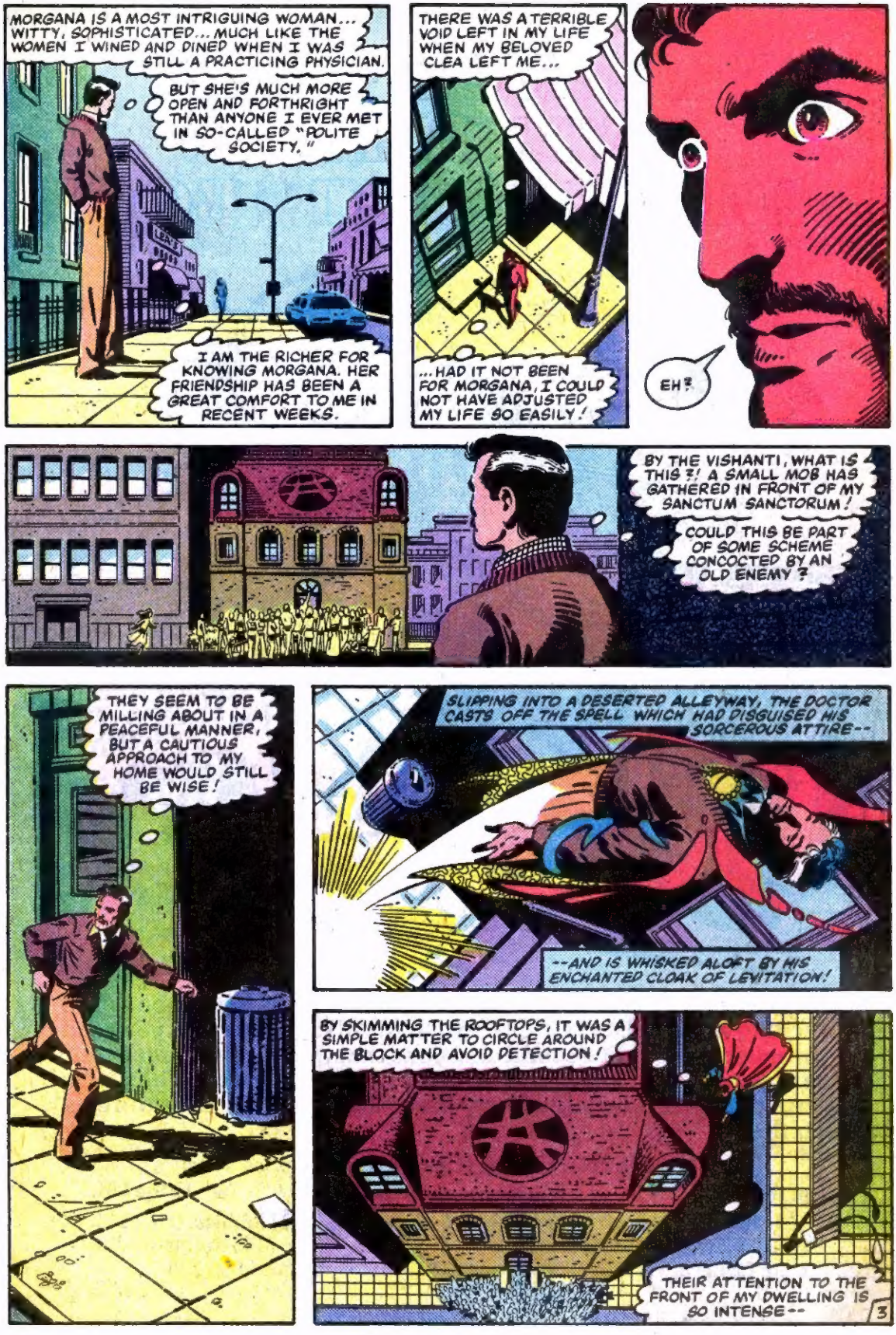
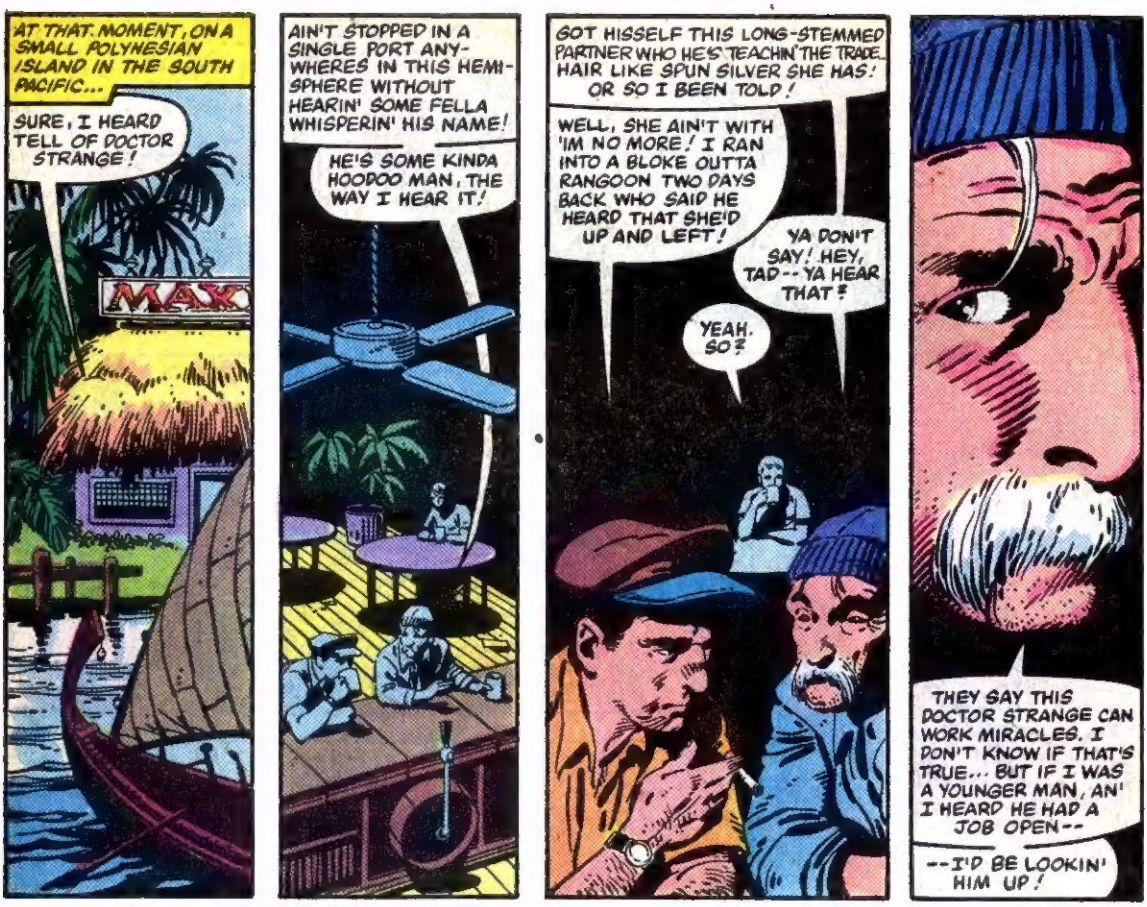
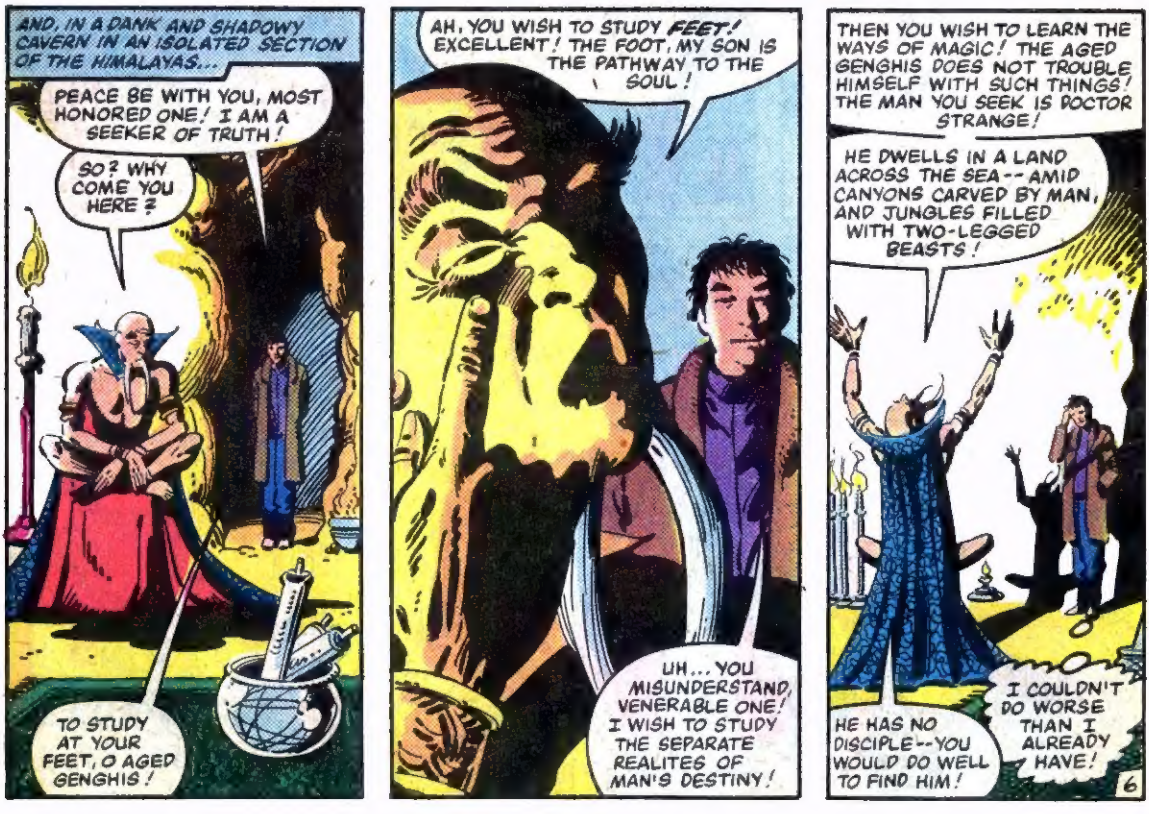
WELL, YES... I AM STEPHEN STRANGE, BUT--!
OH, JUST KIDDING WITH THE FUNKY TITLE, DOC! HA-HAH-HAH! STILL, THIS IS A STROKE OF LUCK--WE WERE JUST HEADING TOWARDS YOUR BLEECKER STREET DIGS...
..."WE" BEING MY LADY, BUNNI, AND ME!
MONTAGU'S THE NAME... SCOTT MONTAGU! I'M AN ACTOR!
AH... PLEASED TO MEET YOU. THIS IS MY FRIEND, MORGANA BLESSING!
HELLO.
THE MORGANA BLESSING? THE NOVELIST? HEY, I CAUGHT THE EXCERPT FROM YOUR LAST BOOK IN ESQUIRE, LADY! AWESOME, JUST AWESOME!
NOW, MY LADY'S INTO YOUR GIG, DOC--YOU KNOW, THE HOCUS-POCUS STUFF!
MIND IF WE JOIN YOU?
SCOTT!
PULL UP A CHAIR, BUN!
YA SEE, BUNNI TOLD ME THAT YOU'RE PROBABLY THE TOP OCCULT EXPERT ON THE EAST COAST!
MMM-MMM! GOOD!
ANYWAY, BUN WOULD MAKE A GREAT ASSISTANT OR APPRENTICE OR WHATEVER YOU CALL 'EM! SHE CAN READ A TAROT BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS!
THE ONLY TIME HE STOPS TALKING, IT APPEARS, IS WHEN HE'S EATING!
GREAT TOAST! DO THEY BAKE THEIR OWN BREAD?
I'VE HAD ALL I WANT, SCOTT--WHY DON'T YOU FINISH IT FOR ME?
HUNGH?
SCOTT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
HNN YNN DNN NNW!
THE GENTLEMAN WITH THE FULL MOUTH IS PICKING UP THE CHECK!
STEPHEN STRANGE! WHAT DID YOU DO TO THAT YOUNG MAN?
I MERELY ENCOURAGED HIS APPETITE WITH A MINOR SPELL! IT SHOULD WEAR OFF BEFORE THE CAFE RUNS OUT OF BREAD!
AND HERE I THOUGHT WIZARDS DIDN'T HAVE A SENSE OF HUMOR!
I DO HOPE HE WASN'T ON A DIET!
EVEN THOUGH YOU STUCK MR. MONTAGU WITH THE TAB, I STILL WANT TO THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO LUNCH!
WISH I COULD STAY AND SCHMOOZE SOME MORE, BUT I HAVE TO RUN! CIAO!
2

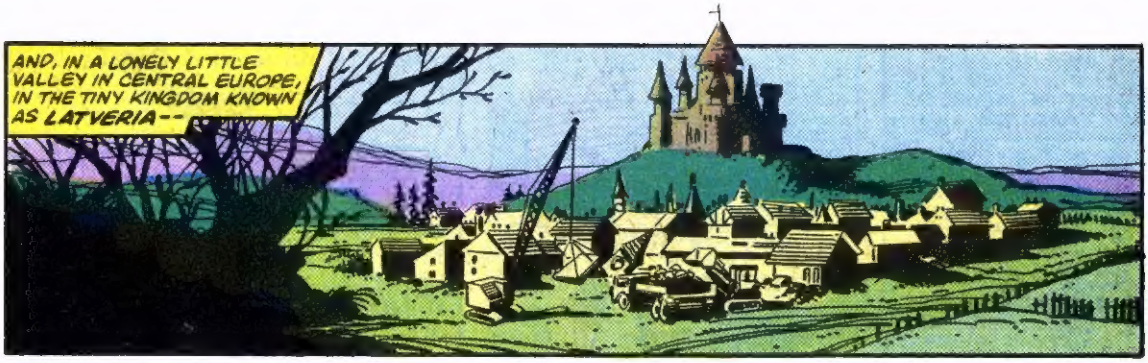

MORGANA IS A MOST INTRIGUING WOMAN... WITTY, SOPHISTICATED... MUCH LIKE THE WOMEN I WINED AND DINED WHEN I WAS STILL A PRACTICING PHYSICIAN.
BUT SHE'S MUCH MORE OPEN AND FORTHRIGHT THAN ANYONE I EVER MET IN SO-CALLED "POLITE SOCIETY."
I AM THE RICHER FOR KNOWING MORGANA. HER FRIENDSHIP HAS BEEN A GREAT COMFORT TO ME IN RECENT WEEKS.
THERE WAS A TERRIBLE VOID LEFT IN MY LIFE WHEN MY BELOVED CLEA LEFT ME...
...HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR MORGANA, I COULD NOT HAVE ADJUSTED MY LIFE SO EASILY!
EH?
BY THE VISHANTI, WHAT IS THIS?! A SMALL MOB HAS GATHERED IN FRONT OF MY SANCTUM SANCTORUM!
COULD THIS BE PART OF SOME SCHEME CONCOCTED BY AN OLD ENEMY?
THEY SEEM TO BE MILLING ABOUT IN A PEACEFUL MANNER, BUT A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO MY HOME WOULD STILL BE WISE!
SLIPPING INTO A DESERTED ALLEYWAY, THE DOCTOR CASTS OFF THE SPELL WHICH HAD DISGUISED HIS SORCEROUS ATTIRE--
--AND IS WHISKED ALOFT BY HIS ENCHANTED CLOAK OF LEVITATION!
BY SKIMMING THE ROOFTOPS, IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER TO CIRCLE AROUND THE BLOCK AND AVOID DETECTION!
THEIR ATTENTION TO THE FRONT OF MY DWELLING IS SO INTENSE--
3

--THAT IT WAS NOT EVEN NECESSARY FOR ME TO INVOKE A SPELL OF INVISIBILITY!
SOON, INSIDE...
WONG! WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE ANCIENT ONE IS GOING ON OUTSIDE?
THANK OSHTUR, YOU'VE RETURNED, MASTER! I COULD NOT CONVINCE THE CROWD TO LEAVE!
THEY ALL WISH TO SPEAK WITH YOU!
WITH ME? BUT WHY?
EACH HAS COME SEEKING TO BECOME YOUR NEW DISCIPLE!
WHAT?!
THEIR CLAMMERING HAS GROWN SO IN THE PAST FEW MINUTES, THAT I WAS CONSIDERING SUMMONING THE POLICE!
YOU WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET A FREE LINE, WONG! THE PHONE'S BEEN RINGING OFF THE HOOK ALL MORNING!
DOC, WE'VE BEEN GETTING CALLS FROM ALL KINDS OF CRAZIES...
...EX-MOONIES, OMMIES, CULTISTS, YOU NAME IT! AND THEY ALL WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE!
OH, NOT AGAIN!
RING RING
DISCOURAGE THEM AS GRACIOUSLY AS YOU CAN, SARA!
I KNEW THERE WERE RISKS INVOLVED WITH BEING YOUR SOCIAL SECRETARY, BUT I NEVER EXPECTED SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
MASTER, WHAT OF THE CROWD?
ITS VERY PRESENCE THREATENS THE ANONYMITY I REQUIRE FOR MY WORK. I SHALL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THIS PERSONALLY.
ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING!
RING
WOWEE!
LOOK!
IT'S HIM!
DOCTOR STRANGE!
AT LAST!
HOORAY!
4

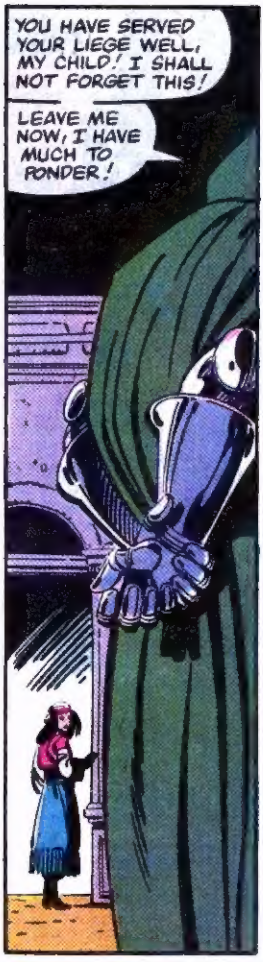
DOCTOR, MAKE ME YOUR DISCIPLE!
NO, ME! PICK ME!
ME! I CAME ALL THE WAY FROM BERKELEY!
ZEALOTS SUCH AS THESE CANNOT BE MADE TO LEAVE WITH A SIMPLE PLEA. AN ENCHANTMENT SHALL BE NECESSARY!
BY MUNNOPOR'S MAZE, STILL THY CRIES! FROM ALL-SEEING LIGHT, TURN THINE EYES!
ALL YE PEOPLE, DISPERSE! LEST YE FALL 'FORE MY CURSE--
--BUT LET ONE FROM YOUR NUMBER ARISE!
SILENTLY, PEACEFULLY, THE GATHERED CROWD BREAKS UP AND DRIFTS AWAY, LEAVING ONE LONE REPRESENTATIVE BEHIND...
SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT! WHY DID YOU COME HERE?
WE...ALL...DABBLE IN THE OCCULT! WORD GOT AROUND THAT YOUR DISCIPLE, CLEA, HAD QUIT! WE FIGURED YOU'D BE LOOKING FOR A NEW STUDENT!
YOU WERE MISTAKEN. BE ON YOUR WAY!
NONE OF THEM WILL REMEMBER BEING HERE!
I SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED SOMETHING SUCH AS THIS. MY PRESENCE HAS BECOME TOO PUBLIC IN SOME CIRCLES!
BUT HOW ON EARTH DID THEY LEARN OF CLEA'S DEPARTURE?!
5

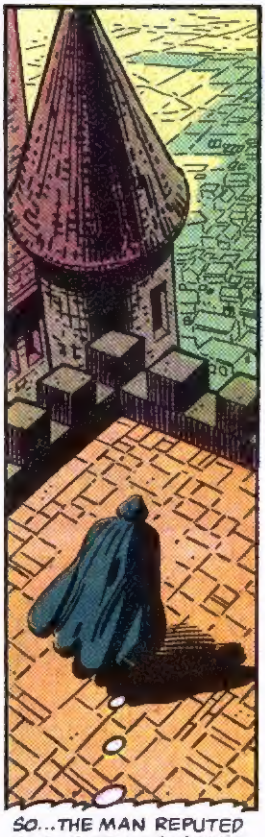

AT THAT MOMENT, ON A SMALL POLYNESIAN ISLAND IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC...
SURE, I HEARD TELL OF DOCTOR STRANGE!
MAK
AIN'T STOPPED IN A SINGLE PORT ANYWHERES IN THIS HEMISPHERE WITHOUT HEARIN' SOME FELLA WHISPERIN' HIS NAME!
HE'S SOME KINDA HOODOO MAN, THE WAY I HEAR IT!
GOT HISSELF THIS LONG-STEMMED PARTNER WHO HE'S TEACHIN' THE TRADE. HAIR LIKE SPUN SILVER SHE HAS! OR SO I BEEN TOLD!
WELL, SHE AIN'T WITH 'IM NO MORE! I RAN INTO A BLOKE OUTTA RANGOON TWO DAYS BACK WHO SAID HE HEARD THAT SHE'D UP AND LEFT!
YA DON'T SAY! HEY, TAD--YA HEAR THAT?
YEAH. SO?
THEY SAY THIS DOCTOR STRANGE CAN WORK MIRACLES. I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S TRUE... BUT IF I WAS A YOUNGER MAN, AN' I HEARD HE HAD A JOB OPEN--
--I'D BE LOOKIN' HIM UP!

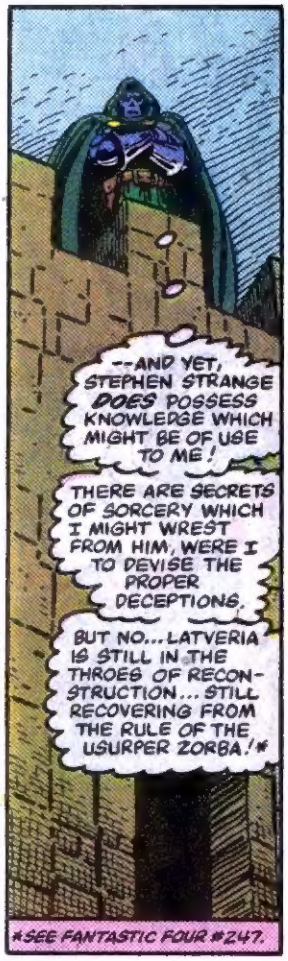

AND, IN A DANK AND SHADOWY CAVERN IN AN ISOLATED SECTION OF THE HIMALAYAS...
PEACE BE WITH YOU, MOST HONORED ONE! I AM A SEEKER OF TRUTH!
SO? WHY COME YOU HERE?
TO STUDY AT YOUR FEET, O AGED GENGHIS!
AH, YOU WISH TO STUDY FEET! EXCELLENT! THE FOOT, MY SON IS THE PATHWAY TO THE SOUL!
UH... YOU MISUNDERSTAND, VENERABLE ONE! I WISH TO STUDY THE SEPARATE REALITES OF MAN'S DESTINY!
THEN YOU WISH TO LEARN THE WAYS OF MAGIC! THE AGED GENGHIS DOES NOT TROUBLE HIMSELF WITH SUCH THINGS! THE MAN YOU SEEK IS DOCTOR STRANGE!
HE DWELLS IN A LAND ACROSS THE SEA--AMID CANYONS CARVED BY MAN, AND JUNGLES FILLED WITH TWO-LEGGED BEASTS!
HE HAS NO DISCIPLE--YOU WOULD DO WELL TO FIND HIM!
I COULDN'T DO WORSE THAN I ALREADY HAVE!
6

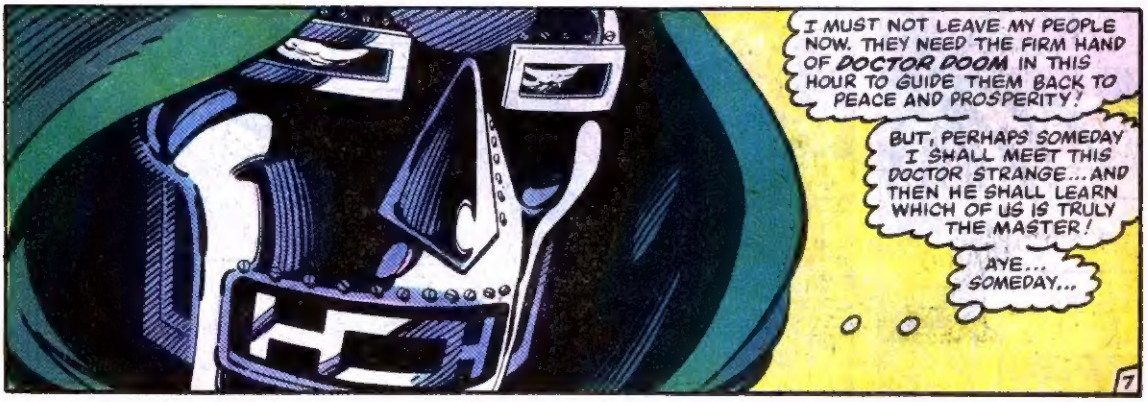

AND, IN A LONELY LITTLE VALLEY IN CENTRAL EUROPE, IN THE TINY KINGDOM KNOWN AS LATVERIA--

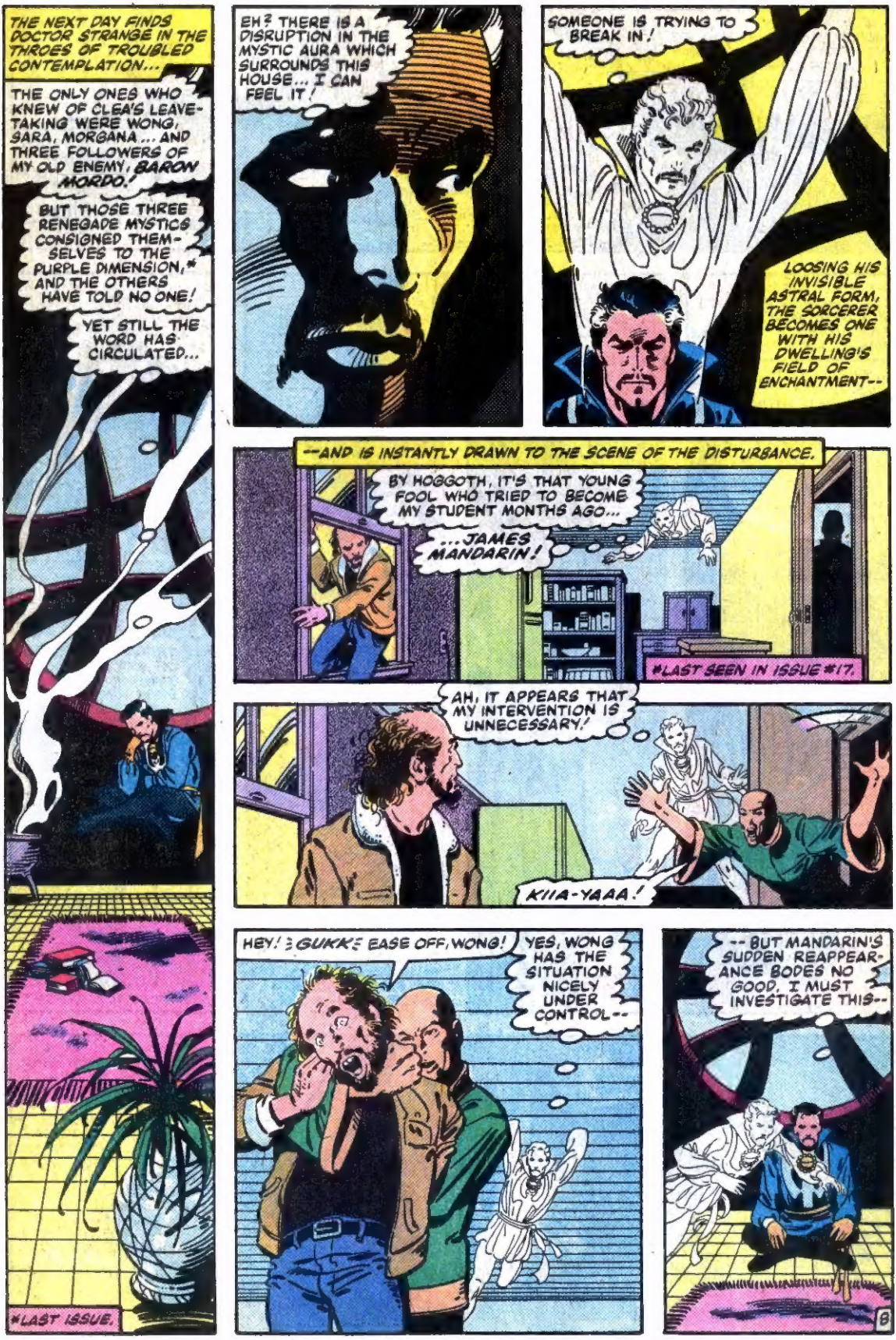
--ONE OF THE WORLD'S LAST REIGNING ABSOLUTE MONARCHS PAUSES TO GIVE AUDIENCE TO A WANDERING GYPSY.
...THUS IT HAS COME PASS THAT DOCTOR STRANGE IS WITHOUT A DISCIPLE.
AS A MASTER OF BOTH SCIENCE AND SORCERY, HERR DOCTOR, I THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO KNOW.


YOU HAVE SERVED YOUR LIEGE WELL, MY CHILD! I SHALL NOT FORGET THIS!
LEAVE ME NOW, I HAVE MUCH TO PONDER!


SO...THE MAN REPUTED TO BE EARTH'S SORCERER SUPREME IS BEREFT OF DISCIPLE, EH? IT WOULD BE UNSEEMLY OF VICTOR VON DOOM TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANY MAN HIS MASTER--

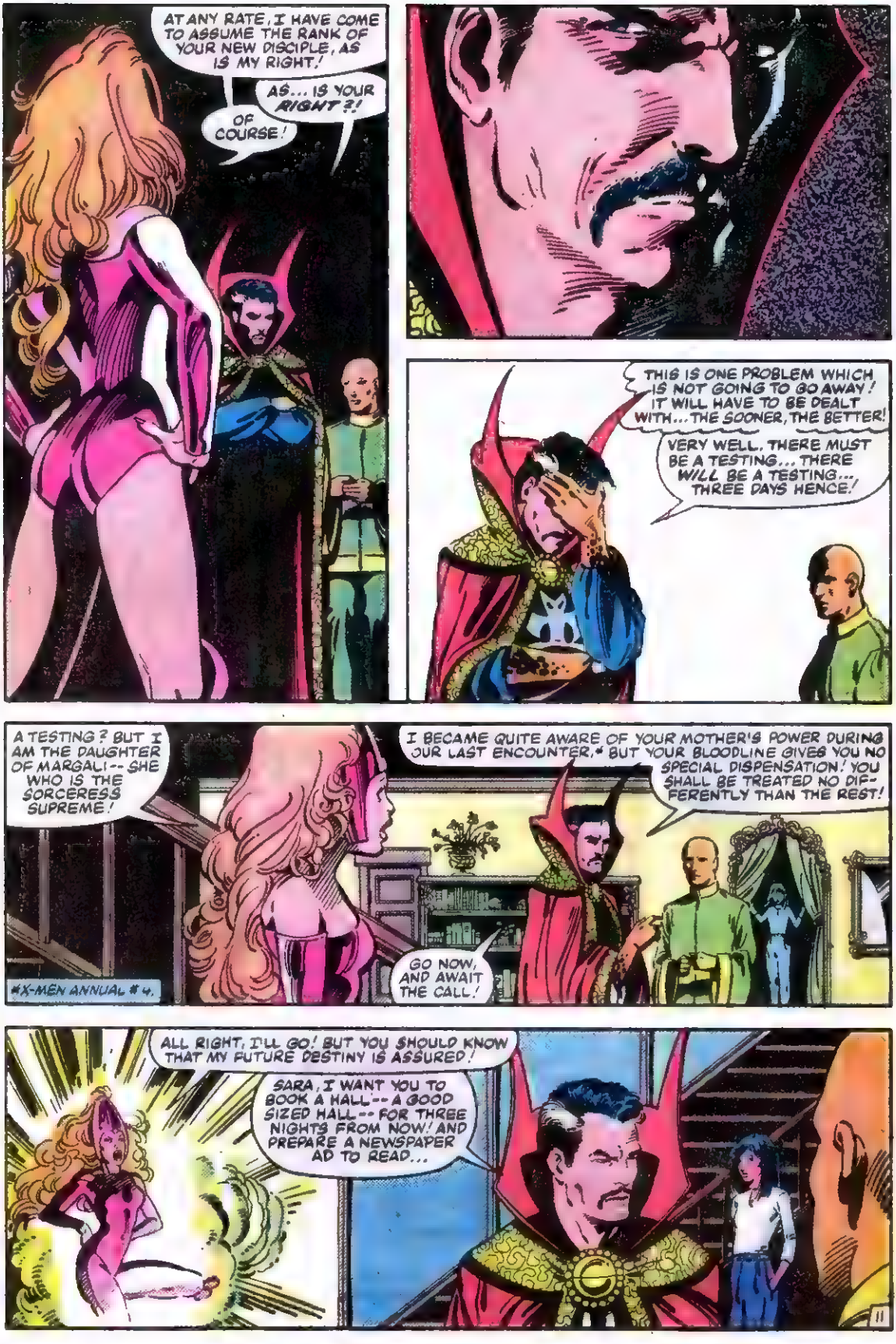

--AND YET, STEPHEN STRANGE DOES POSSESS KNOWLEDGE WHICH MIGHT BE OF USE TO ME!
THERE ARE SECRETS OF SORCERY WHICH I MIGHT WREST FROM HIM, WERE I TO DEVISE THE PROPER DECEPTIONS.
BUT NO...LATVERIA IS STILL IN THE THROES OF RECONSTRUCTION...STILL RECOVERING FROM THE RULE OF THE USURPER ZORBA!*
*SEE FANTASTIC FOUR #247.

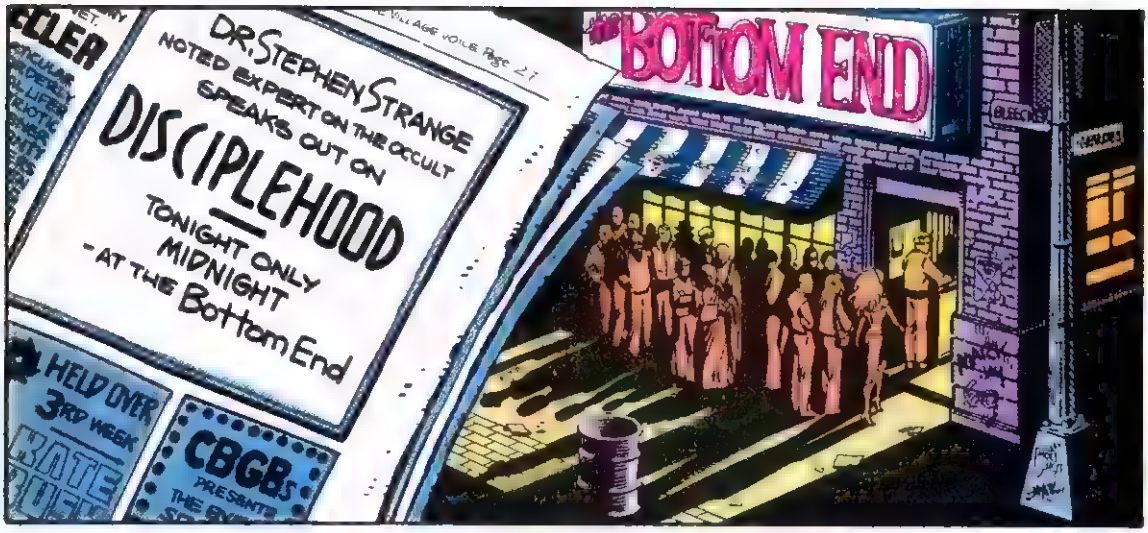

I MUST NOT LEAVE MY PEOPLE NOW. THEY NEED THE FIRM HAND OF DOCTOR DOOM IN THIS HOUR TO GUIDE THEM BACK TO PEACE AND PROSPERITY!
BUT, PERHAPS SOMEDAY I SHALL MEET THIS DOCTOR STRANGE...AND THEN HE SHALL LEARN WHICH OF US IS TRULY THE MASTER!
AYE... SOMEDAY...

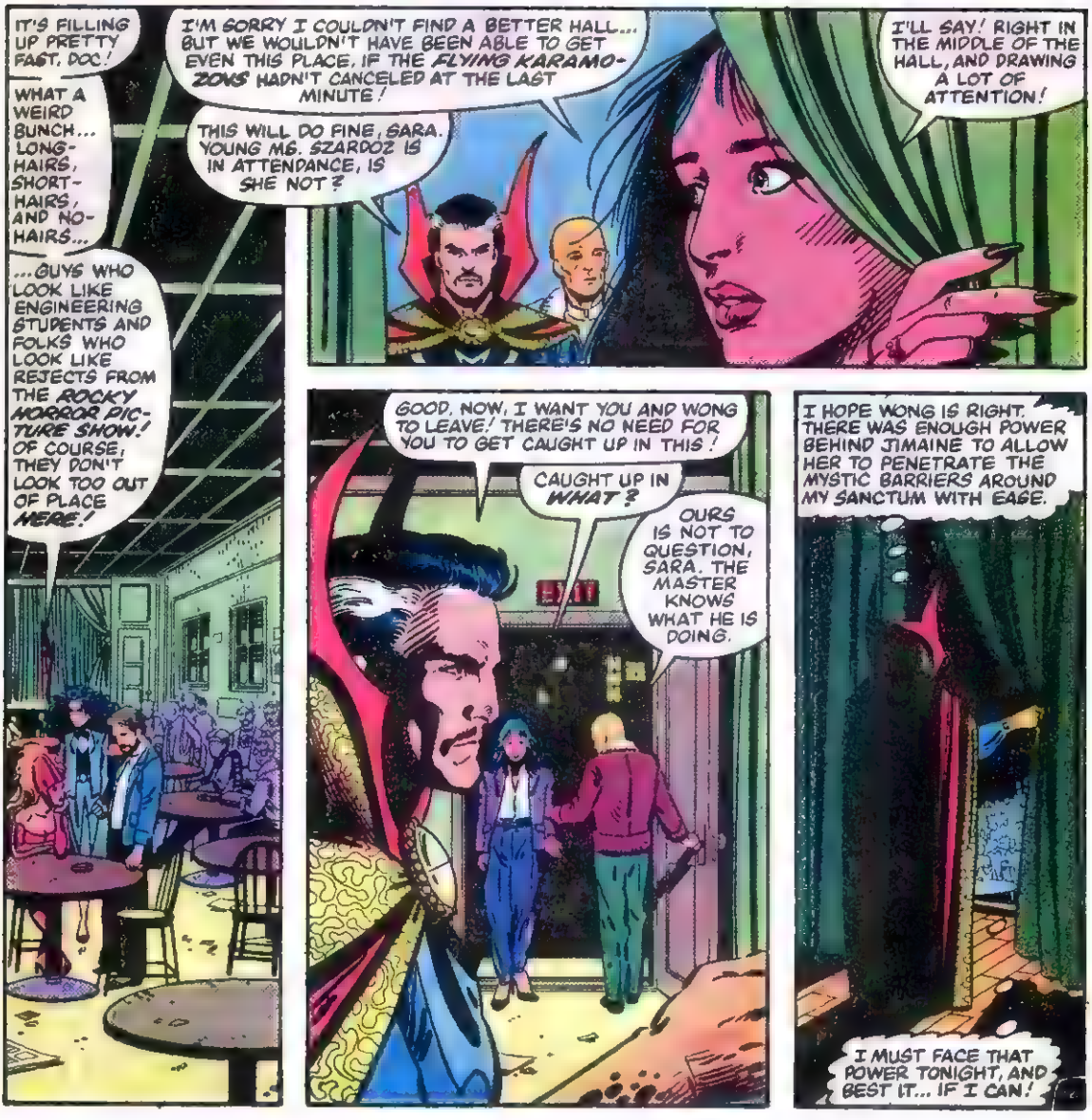

THE NEXT DAY FINDS DOCTOR STRANGE IN THE THROES OF TROUBLED CONTEMPLATION...
THE ONLY ONES WHO KNEW OF CLEA'S LEAVE-TAKING WERE WONG, SARA, MORGANA ... AND THREE FOLLOWERS OF MY OLD ENEMY, BARON MORDO!
BUT THOSE THREE RENEGADE MYSTICS CONSIGNED THEMSELVES TO THE PURPLE DIMENSION,* AND THE OTHERS HAVE TOLD NO ONE!
YET STILL THE WORD HAS CIRCULATED...
*LAST ISSUE.
EH? THERE IS A DISRUPTION IN THE MYSTIC AURA WHICH SURROUNDS THIS HOUSE... I CAN FEEL IT!
SOMEONE IS TRYING TO BREAK IN!
LOOSING HIS INVISIBLE ASTRAL FORM, THE SORCERER BECOMES ONE WITH HIS DWELLING'S FIELD OF ENCHANTMENT--
--AND IS INSTANTLY DRAWN TO THE SCENE OF THE DISTURBANCE.
BY HOGGOTH, IT'S THAT YOUNG FOOL WHO TRIED TO BECOME MY STUDENT MONTHS AGO...
...JAMES MANDARIN!
*LAST SEEN IN ISSUE #17.
AH, IT APPEARS THAT MY INTERVENTION IS UNNECESSARY!
KIIA-YAAA!
HEY! GUKK EASE OFF, WONG!
YES, WONG HAS THE SITUATION NICELY UNDER CONTROL--
-- BUT MANDARIN'S SUDDEN REAPPEARANCE BODES NO GOOD. I MUST INVESTIGATE THIS--
8

"--FIRSTHAND!" WHY HAVE YOU RETURNED, MANDARIN? YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOU ARE NOT WELCOME IN THIS HOUSE!
I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY, DOCTOR! LOOK, I KNOW I PULLED A FAST ONE ON YOU LAST TIME I WAS HERE...
...LEASTWAYS, I THINK I DID. MY MIND'S STILL A LITTLE FUZZY ABOUT THE DETAILS, I BET THAT'S YOUR DOING, RIGHT?
BUT WHETHER IT IS OR NOT, I'M STILL SINCERE ABOUT WANTING TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE! AND THIS TIME, YOU HAVE NO REASON TO DENY ME!
YOUR FORMER DISCIPLE --THAT CLEA CHICKIE--IS GONE! AND I'M A LOT CRAFTIER THAN ANY OF THAT BUNCH OUTSIDE!
OUTSIDE?
NOT AGAIN! HOW LONG IS THIS GOING TO LAST?
YOU, MANDARIN! YOU CLAIM SINCERITY!
LET'S TEST THAT!
WITH A THOUGHT, DR. STRANGE RELEASES THE EYE OF AGAMOTTO FROM THE AMULET AT HIS THROAT...
...FREEING IT TO RISE TO HIS FOREHEAD WHERE IT BECOMES A PART OF HIM... AN ALL-SEEING THIRD EYE!
WHEN FIRST YOU ENTERED MY HOUSE, YOU GAVE YOURSELF OVER TO A DEMONIC FORCE WHICH CALLED ITSELF SATAN.
I WOULD LEARN WHOSE PAWN YOU ARE THIS TIME!
YOU CANNOT RESIST THE LIGHT OF TRUTH!
WHO SENT YOU HERE... WHO?!
N-NO ONE... I CAME OUT OF MY OWN WILL AND DESIRE!
THERE IS POWER IN YOUR MAGIC... I WANT SOME!
9

I SEE THAT THE INTERVENING MONTHS HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT LITTLE CHANGE IN YOU, MANDARIN. YOU STILL LACK SELF-CONTROL.
AT LEAST, THIS TIME, YOU ARE NOT UNDER THE CONTROL OF ANOTHER!
SEE HIM OUT, WONG!
IT WILL BE A PLEASURE, MASTER!
HEY! WHAT'RE YOU--!
WHOAAAH!
I BELIEVE THE CROWD IS DISPERSING, MASTER!
NO DOUBT MANDARIN'S EXIT DISCOURAGED SOME OF THEM. BUT FOR HOW LONG?
WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO KEEP THESE WOULD-BE MYSTICS AWAY FROM OUR DOOR?
I SUPPOSE WE SHOULD COUNT OURSELVES LUCKY THAT NO TRUE MAGICIANS HAVE COME KNOCKING!
GREETINGS, O HONORED MAGE--
--JIMAINE SZARDOS... FIRST-BORN WOMAN-CHILD AND HEIR OF MARBALI OF THE WINDING ROAD... BIDS YOU WELL!
WHAT?!?
I BEG YOUR INDULGENCE FOR USING YOUR CANDLES AS A MEDIUM FOR MY ENTRANCE!
WHEN I SAW THE RABBLE OUTSIDE, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO CIRCUMVENT THE NORMAL CHANNELS OF ENTRY!


AT ANY RATE, I HAVE COME TO ASSUME THE RANK OF YOUR NEW DISCIPLE, AS IS MY RIGHT.'
AS... IS YOUR RIGHT?!
OF COURSE!
THIS IS ONE PROBLEM WHICH IS NOT GOING TO GO AWAY! IT WILL HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH... THE SOONER, THE BETTER!
VERY WELL. THERE MUST BE A TESTING... THERE WILL BE A TESTING... THREE DAYS HENCE!'
A TESTING? BUT I AM THE DAUGHTER OF MARGALI -- SHE WHO IS THE SORCERESS SUPREME!
I BECAME QUITE AWARE OF YOUR MOTHER'S POWER DURING OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, BUT YOUR BLOODLINE GIVES YOU NO SPECIAL DISPENSATION! YOU SHALL BE TREATED NO DIFFERENTLY THAN THE REST!
GO NOW, AND AWAIT THE CALL!
#X-MEN ANNUAL # 4.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL GO! BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MY FUTURE DESTINY IS ASSURED!
SARA, I WANT YOU TO BOOK A HALL -- A GOOD SIZED HALL -- FOR THREE NIGHTS FROM NOW! AND PREPARE A NEWSPAPER AD TO READ...
11


DR. STEPHEN STRANGE
NOTED EXPERT ON THE OCCULT
SPEAKS OUT ON
DISCIPLEHOOD
TONIGHT ONLY
MIDNIGHT
-AT THE Bottom End
HELD OVER
3RD WEEK
CBGBs
THE BOTTOM END


IT'S FILLING UP PRETTY FAST, DOC!
WHAT A WEIRD BUNCH... LONG-HAIRS, SHORT-HAIRS, AND NO-HAIRS...
...GUYS WHO LOOK LIKE ENGINEERING STUDENTS AND FOLKS WHO LOOK LIKE REJECTS FROM THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW! OF COURSE, THEY DON'T LOOK TOO OUT OF PLACE HERE!
I'M SORRY I COULDN'T FIND A BETTER HALL... BUT WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET EVEN THIS PLACE, IF THE FLYING KARAMOZOVS HADN'T CANCELED AT THE LAST MINUTE!
THIS WILL DO FINE, SARA. YOUNG MS. SZARDOZ IS IN ATTENDANCE, IS SHE NOT?
I'LL SAY! RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE HALL, AND DRAWING A LOT OF ATTENTION!
GOOD. NOW, I WANT YOU AND WONG TO LEAVE! THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO GET CAUGHT UP IN THIS!
CAUGHT UP IN WHAT?
OURS IS NOT TO QUESTION, SARA. THE MASTER KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING.
I HOPE WONG IS RIGHT. THERE WAS ENOUGH POWER BEHIND JIMAINE TO ALLOW HER TO PENETRATE THE MYSTIC BARRIERS AROUND MY SANCTUM WITH EASE.
I MUST FACE THAT POWER TONIGHT, AND BEST IT... IF I CAN!

THIS IS A HALL THAT HAS KNOWN LOUD, AMPLIFIED MUSIC AND RAUCOUS LAUGHTER, BUT WHEN DR. STRANGE STEPS OUT ONTO THE STAGE, THE ONLY RESPONSE IS POLITE, SUBDUED APPLAUSE.
GOOD EVENING.
MOST OF YOU HAVE COME HERE TONIGHT, HOPING TO BE CHOSEN TO STUDY UNDER ME--
--TO LEARN MORE OF THE WAYS OF MYSTICISM AND THE OCCULT. BUT THERE IS MORE TO THAT STUDY THAN MOST OF YOU MIGHT EVER DREAM!
IN THE MYSTIC ORDER TO WHICH I BELONG, IT IS INDEED WRITTEN THAT PRACTIONERS OF THE MAGICAL ARTS MUST CHOOSE A DISCIPLE OR DISCIPLES, TO INSURE THE CONTINUITY OF THE STRUGGLE AGAINST MALEFIC FORCES...
...BUT ONLY AT SUCH A TIME THAT IT IS FITTING AND PROPER! I ONCE CHOSE A DISCIPLE BEFORE I HAD REACHED THAT TIME, AND I HAVE PAID FOR THAT HASTE IN RECENT DAYS!
I MUST TELL YOU NOW, THAT MY TIME HAS NOT YET COME! VISHANTI WILLING, I SHALL ONE DAY CHOOSE A TRUE DISCIPLE. BUT I SHALL NOT DO SO THIS NIGHT!
LIAR! YOU SEEK TO DENY ME WHAT IS MINE, BY RIGHT! YOU SAID THERE WOULD BE A TESTING--
--AND BY THE DARKHOLD, THERE SHALL BE!
YOU SHALL BE PUT TO THE TEST, STEPHEN STRANGE!

YOU CHALLENGE ME WITH A COMMON BOLT OF BEDEVILMENT, JIMAINE? EVEN A NOVICE IN THE MYSTIC ARTS COULD WARD OFF SUCH AN ATTACK!
AND A MYSTIC TRUE CAN TURN BACK THE POWER, BENDING AND SHAPING IT--
--TO HIS WILL! THIS YOU WOULD KNOW, IF YOUR POWER CAME FROM WITHIN! BUT IT DOES NOT, DOES IT?
YOU DARE TO HUMBLE THE CHILDE OF THE SORCERESS SUPREME?!?
AH, THE TRUE SOURCE OF YOUR POWER HAS ARRIVED!
M-MOTHER?
HEAR ME, DOCTOR STRANGE! I DID SEND MY DAUGHTER UNTO YOU TO FURTHER HER GROWTH IN THE SORCEROUS ARTS!
BUT YOU HAVE DENIED HER, AND IN DOING SO, YOU MUST FACE THE WRATH OF SHE WHO IS YOUR BETTER!
THE TRUE TESTING, THEN, IS AT HAND!
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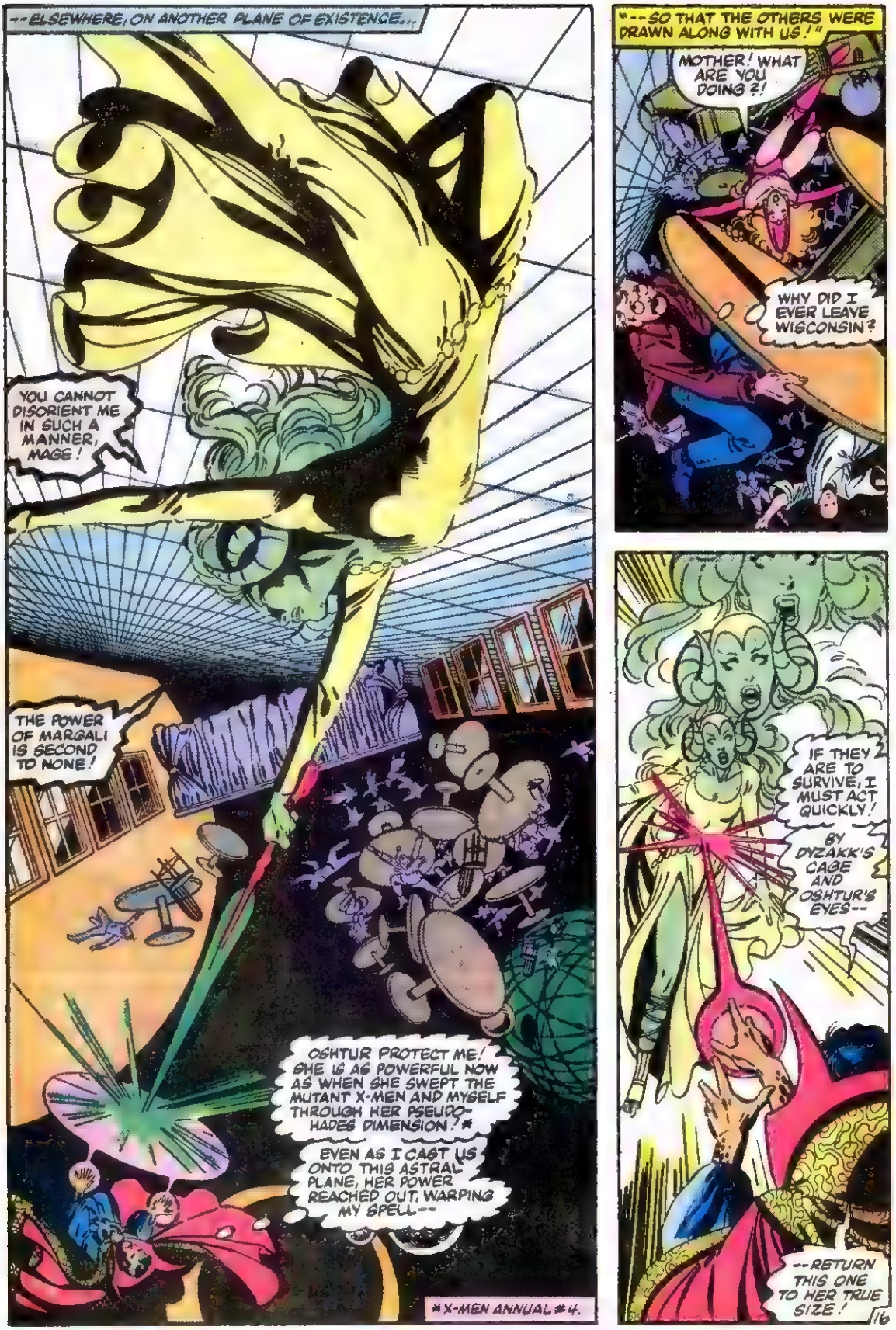
WHAT?! YOU THINK TO TEST THE POWER OF MARGALI OF THE WINDING ROAD?!?
I DO! SINCE OUR PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER, I HAVE SECRETLY SOUGHT THE SOURCE OF YOUR PRETERNATURAL POWER... BUT SOMETHING KEPT IT HIDDEN FROM ME!
NOW SHALL WE DETERMINE THE TRUTH BEHIND YOUR MIGHT, O "SORCERESS SUPREME"...
...BUT NOT IN THIS PLACE!
KRA-
THAM
OUTSIDE...
SARA, YOU SHOULD NOT INTERRUPT THE MASTER!
INTERRUPT?! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU, WONG? YOU HEARD THAT NOISE! THE WHOLE BUILDING SHOOK!
WE HAVE TO CHECK AND SEE IF DOC NEEDS ANY ... HELP?
OMIGOD.
WH-WHERE'D EVERYTHING GO?!
BUT, EVEN AS SARA WOLFE'S QUESTION ECHOES THROUGHOUT THE BLANK-WALLED CHAMBER---


--ELSEWHERE, ON ANOTHER PLANE OF EXISTENCE...
YOU CANNOT DISORIENT ME IN SUCH A MANNER, MAGE!
THE POWER OF MARGALI IS SECOND TO NONE!
OSHTUR PROTECT ME! SHE IS AS POWERFUL NOW AS WHEN SHE SWEPT THE MUTANT X-MEN AND MYSELF THROUGH HER PSEUDO-HADES DIMENSION!*
EVEN AS I CAST US ONTO THIS ASTRAL PLANE, HER POWER REACHED OUT, WARPING MY SPELL--
*X-MEN ANNUAL #4.
"--SO THAT THE OTHERS WERE DRAWN ALONG WITH US!"
MOTHER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WHY DID I EVER LEAVE WISCONSIN?
IF THEY ARE TO SURVIVE, I MUST ACT QUICKLY!
BY DYZAKK'S CAGE AND OSHTUR'S EYES--
--RETURN THIS ONE TO HER TRUE SIZE!

MY SUSPICIONS WERE CORRECT-- MARGALI IS NOT A TRUE GIANTESS! ONLY THE POWER SHE HAS TAPPED MADE HER APPEAR LARGER THAN LIFE!
MOREOVER, HER SUDDEN REVERSION TO NORMAL SIZE HAS TAKEN HER BY SURPRISE...LEFT HER STUNNED! IF I AM TO DEFEAT HER--
--IT MUST BE NOW!
BY THE MIGHTY VISHANTI, BY THE THREE OVER ALL--
--HEAR THE PLEA OF THIS MYSTIC AND BRING MY FOE'S FALL!
ASTOUNDING! THAT SPELL SHOULD HAVE RENDERED HER UNCONSCIOUS! TRUE, SHE WAS DRIVEN TO HER KNEES, BUT--!
YOU... YOU...
...YOU HAVE HUMBLED ME, MAGE. NO ONE HAS E'ER DONE THAT!
NO ONE!
SHE STRIKES OUT RECKLESSLY, BUT HER LACK OF CAUTION MAKES HER NO LESS DEADLY! HER POWER NEARLY RENT MY CLOAK OF LEVITATION ASUNDER--
--AND IT WOULD HAVE CUT THROUGH ME LIKE A KNIFE, HAD I NOT MOVED AS QUICKLY AS I DID!
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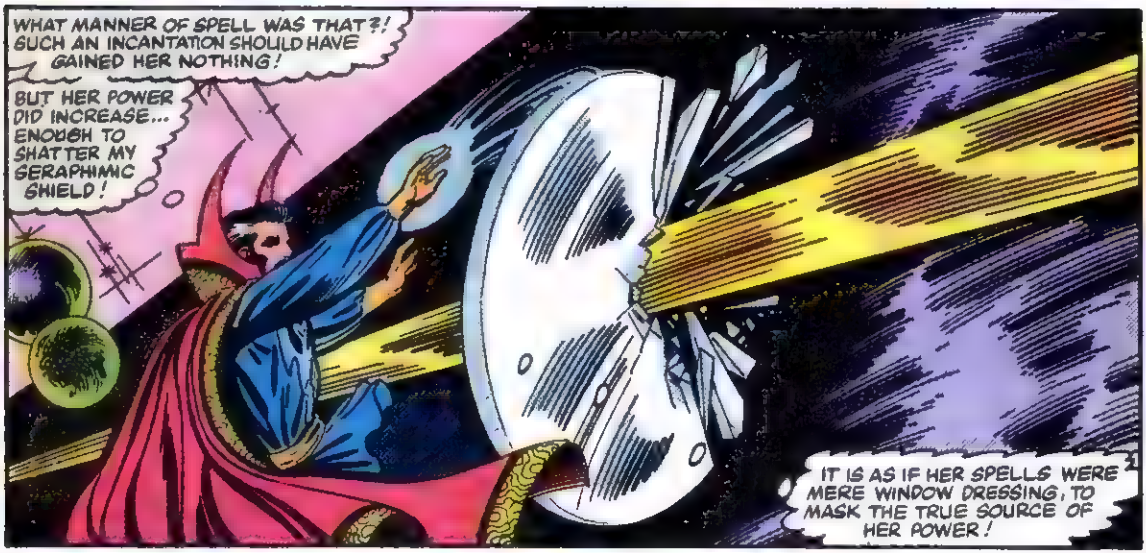
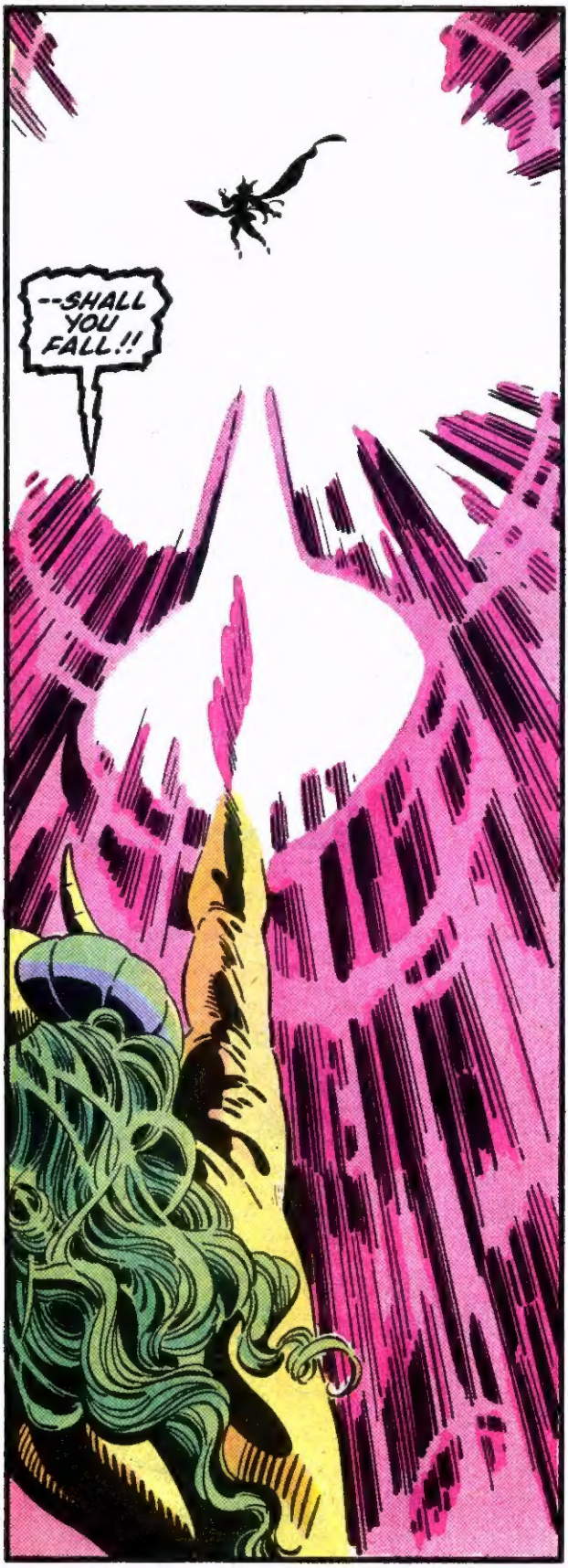
BY THE ROAD EVER WINDING O'ER WHICH I HOLD SWAY LET MY POWER KEEP GROWING, MY FOEMAN TO SLAY!

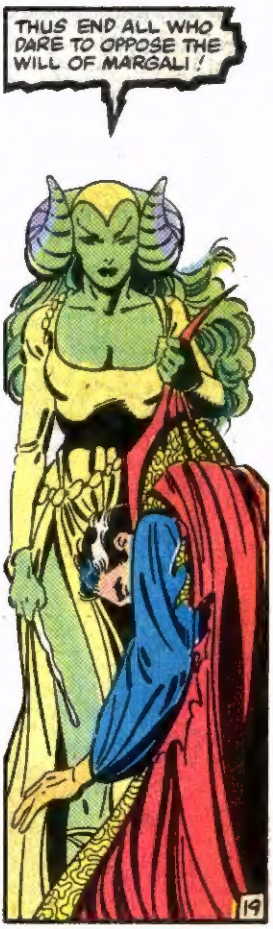

WHAT MANNER OF SPELL WAS THAT?! SUCH AN INCANTATION SHOULD HAVE GAINED HER NOTHING!
BUT HER POWER DID INCREASE... ENOUGH TO SHATTER MY SERAPHIMIC SHIELD!
IT IS AS IF HER SPELLS WERE MERE WINDOW DRESSING, TO MASK THE TRUE SOURCE OF HER POWER!

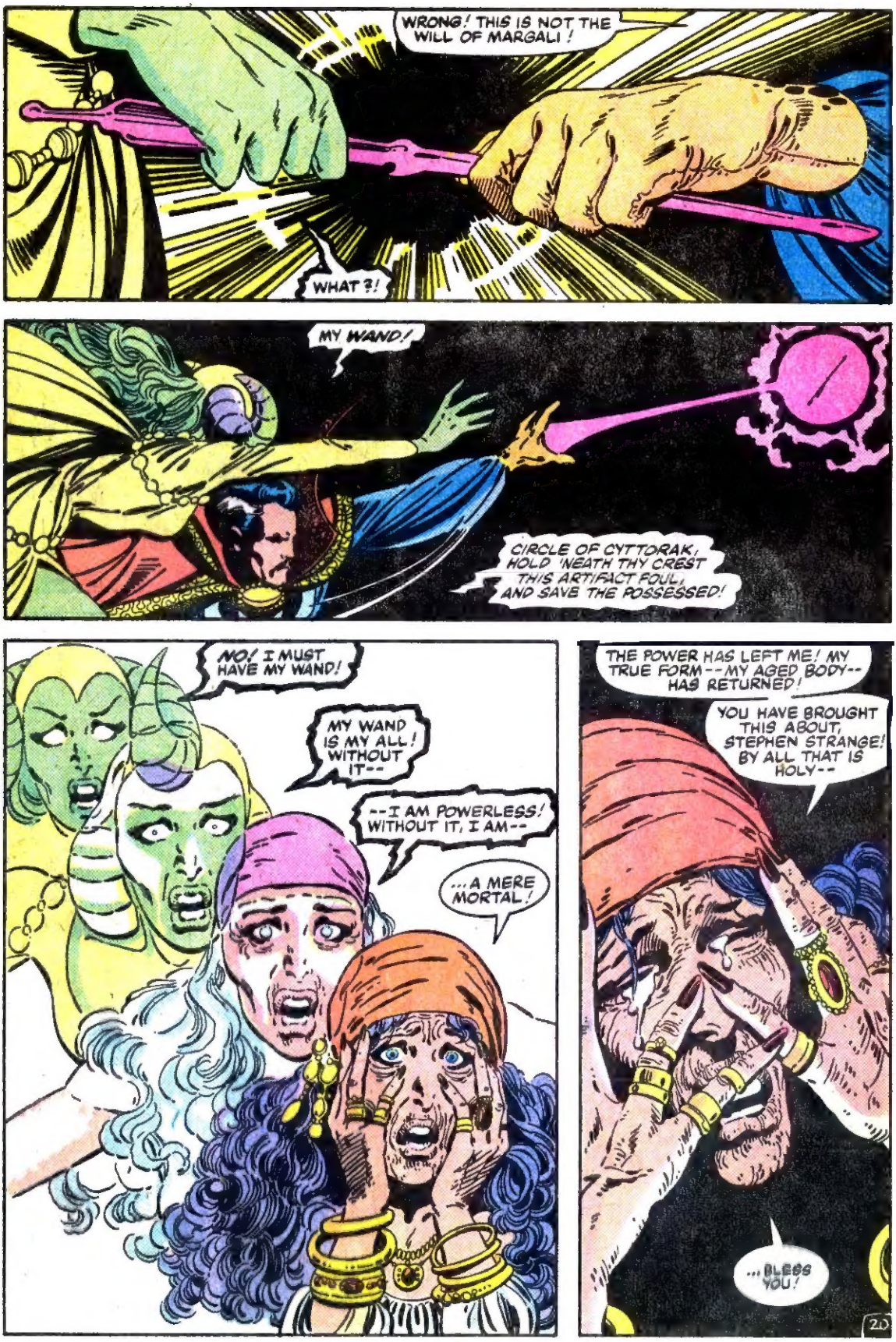
'FORE THE DEADLIEST POWER MAY MY SOUL NEVER YIELD! LET THE WINDS OF WATOOMB STRENGTHEN SERAPHIM'S SHIELD!

TOO LATE, DOCTOR! NOW, BY MY WAND--


--SHALL YOU FALL!!

IT IS OVER... IT IS DONE!


THUS END ALL WHO DARE TO OPPOSE THE WILL OF MARGALI!


WRONG! THIS IS NOT THE WILL OF MARGALI!
WHAT?!
MY WAND!
CIRCLE OF CYTTORAK, HOLD 'NEATH THY CREST THIS ARTIFACT FOUL, AND SAVE THE POSSESSED!
NO! I MUST HAVE MY WAND!
MY WAND IS MY ALL! WITHOUT IT--
--I AM POWERLESS! WITHOUT IT, I AM--
...A MERE MORTAL!
THE POWER HAS LEFT ME! MY TRUE FORM--MY AGED BODY--HAS RETURNED!
YOU HAVE BROUGHT THIS ABOUT, STEPHEN STRANGE! BY ALL THAT IS HOLY--
...BLESS YOU!
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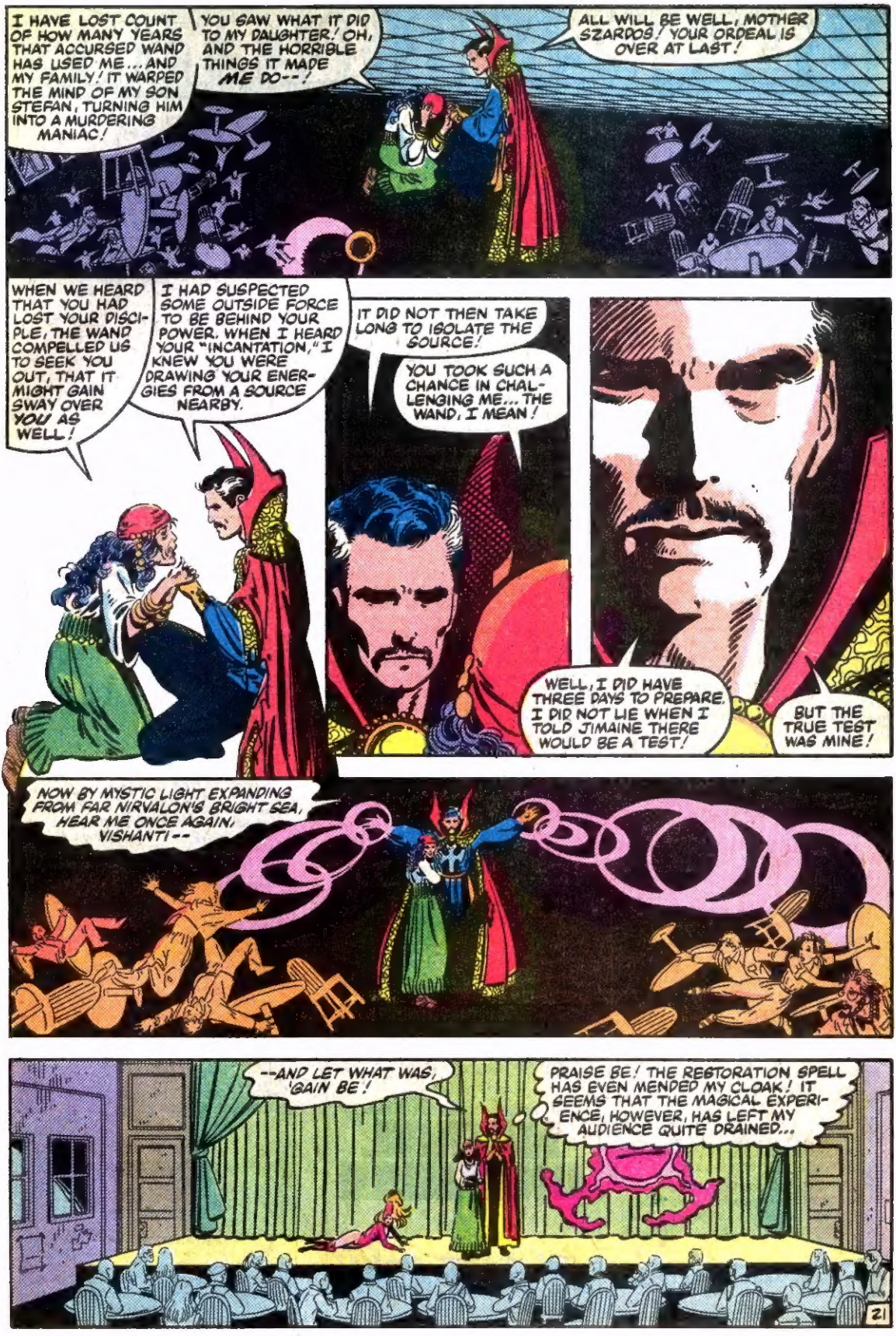
I HAVE LOST COUNT OF HOW MANY YEARS THAT ACCURSED WAND HAS USED ME... AND MY FAMILY! IT WARPED THE MIND OF MY SON STEFAN, TURNING HIM INTO A MURDERING MANIAC!
YOU SAW WHAT IT DID TO MY DAUGHTER! OH, AND THE HORRIBLE THINGS IT MADE ME DO--!
ALL WILL BE WELL, MOTHER SZARDOS! YOUR ORDEAL IS OVER AT LAST!
WHEN WE HEARD THAT YOU HAD LOST YOUR DISCIPLE, THE WAND COMPELLED US TO SEEK YOU OUT, THAT IT MIGHT GAIN SWAY OVER YOU AS WELL!
I HAD SUSPECTED SOME OUTSIDE FORCE TO BE BEHIND YOUR POWER. WHEN I HEARD YOUR "INCANTATION," I KNEW YOU WERE DRAWING YOUR ENERGIES FROM A SOURCE NEARBY.
IT DID NOT THEN TAKE LONG TO ISOLATE THE SOURCE!
YOU TOOK SUCH A CHANCE IN CHALLENGING ME... THE WAND, I MEAN!
WELL, I DID HAVE THREE DAYS TO PREPARE. I DID NOT LIE WHEN I TOLD JIMAINE THERE WOULD BE A TEST!
BUT THE TRUE TEST WAS MINE!
NOW BY MYSTIC LIGHT EXPANDING FROM FAR NIRVALON'S BRIGHT SEA, HEAR ME ONCE AGAIN, VISHANTI--
--AND LET WHAT WAS, 'GAIN BE!
PRAISE BE! THE RESTORATION SPELL HAS EVEN MENDED MY CLOAK! IT SEEMS THAT THE MAGICAL EXPERIENCE, HOWEVER, HAS LEFT MY AUDIENCE QUITE DRAINED...
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...ALL THE BETTER FOR MY PURPOSES!
HEED WELL MY WORDS! YOU SHALL REMEMBER NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY HAVING OCCURRED THIS NIGHT!
BUT YOU SHALL GO FORTH AND SPREAD THE WORD THAT DOCTOR STRANGE NEEDS NO FOLLOWERS! DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
YES.
YES.
NO FOLLOWERS.

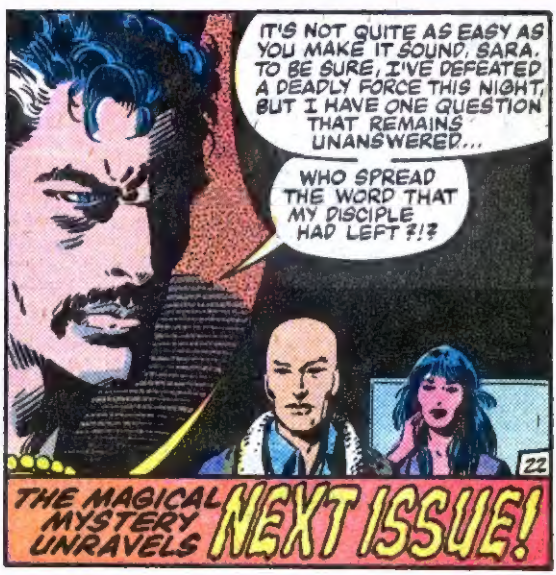
MOTHER?
WHAT HAPPENED?
I FEEL AS THOUGH I JUST WOKE UP FROM A BAD DREAM!
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, JIMAINE!

THE NIGHTMARE IS OVER! WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!
YES, MOTHER SZARDOS...

...NOTHING TO FEAR... EVER AGAIN!
SNAP

DOC, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?! WHERE HAS EVERYBODY BEEN? JUST A FEW MINUTES AGO, THIS PLACE WAS EMPTY... RIGHT DOWN TO, AND INCLUDING, THE WINDOWS!
CALM YOURSELF, SARA, THERE'S NO NEED--!

I KNOW, I KNOW! "THERE'S NO NEED TO GET EXCITED!"
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT! I REALLY SHOULD BE GETTING USED TO THIS MAGIC STUFF BY NOW! I MEAN, I'VE WORKED FOR YOU FOR HALF THE SEASON NOW--
--AND HARDLY A WEEK'S GONE BY WHEN YOU DIDN'T SOLVE THINGS BY SNAPPING YOUR MAGIC FINGERS!


IT'S NOT QUITE AS EASY AS YOU MAKE IT SOUND, SARA. TO BE SURE, I'VE DEFEATED A DEADLY FORCE THIS NIGHT, BUT I HAVE ONE QUESTION THAT REMAINS UNANSWERED...
WHO SPREAD THE WORD THAT MY DISCIPLE HAD LEFT?!?
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THE MAGICAL MYSTERY UNRAVELS
NEXT ISSUE!